

# **GLOBALISM AND NATIONALISM IN TRANSNATIONAL JAPANESE LITERATURE**

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by

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## **ABSTRACT**

### **Globalism and Nationalism in Transnational Japanese Literature**

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During the Meiji Era, when Japan finally opened its borders after centuries of isolation, Japanese writers began to look outwards towards countries like the United States. At the same time, the West gained greater awareness of Japan. Writing from the time period reflects Japan's curiosity, but also a certain wariness that they could end up colonized and divided like China. In the time leading up to WWII, Japan for a second time closed itself off to the West. However, after the war, Japan again focused on global connections, and many writers began moving out of Japan.

Transnational Japanese literature from the Meiji Era to the present offers insight into Japan's view of the world – a view that has little study in the Western world. There are many articles on how the West views Japan, and how Japanese migrants struggle to live in the West. However, there is little research into nationalism and globalization within Japanese writers. This paper examines the themes of nationalism and globalization within transnational Japanese writers Lafcadio Hearn, Sugimoto Estu, Shimazaki Tōson, Kazuo Ishiguro, and Murakami Haruki. By examining how each author's definition of Japaneseness colludes with the international affairs of their time period, I examine how internationalism shaped Japanese nationalism throughout modern history.

## **DEDICATION**

To my mother, who always pushes me to do my best.

## **ACKNOWLEDGMENTS**

I would like to thank Dr. Shandley, for advising me through this project. His advice was invaluable to me in my research and in writing this thesis. I would also like to thank Undergraduate Research Scholars, for granting me the opportunity to write this thesis.

# **CHAPTER I**

## **INTRODUCTION**

Transnational Japanese authors in particular are an interesting study due to the rigorous change Japan went through in the modern era. The formation of the modern Japanese nation-state is intertwined with a major transformation in Japanese foreign relations. Starting with the coming of Commodore Perry at the start of the Meiji Era, Japan underwent a series of political and social changes that made the nation into a modern state, and set the stage for foreign relations and the view of outsiders in the future. Therefore, it is impossible to look into Japanese nationalism without understanding Japanese internationalism.

One of the ways to do so is to examine authors. Stories are discursive objects; by discussing the issues of the day, writers of every age offer insight into the thinking of the period and people who lived then. The characters and morals present in fiction show the values of the time and place for not only their contemporary readers, but modern ones too. Transnational authors in particular offer great insight into the intersection of both nationalism and internationalism. Literature exists in time and is often a product of the time period that produced it. Therefore, by examining writers through the ages, a reader can get a picture of how a nation changes through time. By examining transnational authors, a reader can understand how Japan formed as a nation and fit into world events. By looking at Japanese authors from various points in Japanese history, one can chart the battle between nationalism and internationalism. Transnational authors in particular showcase the struggle because they have an outside perspective on Japan, or write about issues that affect multiple nations.

Transnational Japanese authors showcase the intersection of and struggle between Japanese nationalism and internationalism; it allows readers from all nations to understand Japan's changing view of their own nation and foreign nations as Japan's role in the international sphere changed.

### **The creation of nationalism**

But one cannot begin to look at the line between nationalism and internationalism without some understanding of the main concept it is built upon: the modern nation-state. It is strange to imagine a world before nations. However, the nation-state and nationalism are actually relatively new concepts.

Before the 1800s, ideas like divine right and the chain of being allowed rulers to have absolute power. Citizens were tied to the country by their duty to their lords, and strict laws that prohibited them from leaving their lord's lands. With the enlightenment came thinkers like Locke and Rousseau who introduced the radical concept of the power of the people. Power, Locke said, comes from the consent of the governed, not the governor.

However, without the power of the ruler tying citizens together, thinkers had to explain why citizens of a nation felt bound together. Why should citizens in one city feel bound to citizens of another, if they had never met them, without the common tie of loyalty to their ruler? The answer was first formed around the 1800s by thinkers like G.W.F. Hegel, who helped create the concept of nationalism. Later, Benedict Anderson linked the rise of nationalism with the creation of the printing press, which allowed citizens of a country could feel connected with other citizens they

had never met simply through association through national news and stories. Citizens felt connected to each other because of the imagined community they create through news and stories.

The original Japanese word for nationalism also reflects the concept of a base of the common man. The word was originally *kokuminshugi*, which Stegewerns defines as, “the nationalism in which the claims of the nation (in the sense of ‘the people’) are favoured over the claims of the state, and the term can best be translated as *popular nationalism*” (Stegewerns 12). As the Japanese nation changed in the next century, rising and falling as an imperial power, the definition of nationalism would also change. However, the roots remain the same as the Western conception of the modern nation: the people, not the ruling class, create the nation.

In comparison to the West, Japanese nationalism developed quite late. The country’s has a history of isolation from the Western world; as a result Japan emerged onto the global stage later than its Western counterparts. From then on, Japan’s views on itself, the world, and Japan’s position in the world was in flux, changing frequently in the following century as Japan rose and fell from Imperial power.

### **The development of nationalism and internationalism in Japan**

Japan developed its modern nation-state in the late 1800s, in the Meiji Era. However, Japan’s development differs from the West in that the change was sparked by international influence. Commodore Perry of the United States forced Japan to open its ports, starting a chain reaction of political changes that resulted in the Meiji Restoration and the entire reorganization of the



government. The creation of nationalism coincided with Westernization and Internationalism. Foreign relations were conducted on a national level, meaning that Japan could not conduct foreign relations on equal footing unless they developed a nation-state. Stegewerns writes:

As the term 'internationalism' implies, internationalism has to be an 'intra-nation' thing, and thus internationalism will make no headway whatsoever as long as one denies the present unit of international relations, the nation-state and the nationalism by which it is supported. (Stegewerns 5)

In the end, Japan had to develop into a modern nation-state in order to conduct international relations with the Western World.

The coming of Commodore Perry with his Black Ships marked a turning point in Japanese foreign relations. The Americans came with intentions of Imperialism and threats of war (*Before the Dawn* 93). Fearing that they would become divided up like China, Japan entered crisis mode, trying to make the nation reach Western standards of modernity to interact on even footing with the Americans:

Japan's encounter with modernity was simultaneously an encounter with a historically specific form of internationalism...it was only with the unequal treaties imposed on Japan in the years following Commodore Perry's arrival in 1853 that a global international order made its influence felt in Japan. (Doak 23)

In other words, Japan was exposed to modernity and internationalism at the same time, meaning if Japan wanted to modernize, it would have to learn from other countries, especially countries that claimed to be superior by show of force. Japan therefore often linked modernity with Westernization, and absorbed many Western technologies and ideas. Because of this, Western

views of Japan and the East, especially in the view of Orientalism, formed some of the Japanese identity.

“Orientalism” is a rather loose term, and has taken on many meanings and connotations throughout the years. One of the main writers on Orientalism, Edward Said, defines it three ways. The first way is the academic study of the East, or Oriental studies. The term is not necessarily negative, as it refers to a field of research much in the same way “Asian Studies” does. The second definition is, “a style of thought based upon an ontological and epistemological distinction made between ‘the Orient’ and (most of the time) ‘the Occident’” (Said 2). This second definition implies a dichotomy between the East and West, often at the expense of the East. The dichotomy often bleeds into novels and writing, as “the basic distinction between East and West [acts] as the starting point for elaborate theories, epics, novels, social descriptions, and political accounts concerning the Orient, its people, customs, ‘mind,’ destiny, and so on” (3). In other words, the polarization of East and West often led to a romanticized notion of the East being a place beyond reason, as a place of fairy tales and fancy. Said even goes as far as to claim that “the Orient was almost a European invention” (1), as the concept of the Orient as the West believed it does not actually exist. The third and final definition of Orientalism is more political, as it involves “Orientalism as a Western style for dominating, restructuring, and having authority over the Orient” (3). This third definition often goes hand in hand with Imperialism, as Western countries attempt to colonize the East by imposing Western ideas onto them.

Orientalism creates a dichotomy between the East and West, something which Japan considered in the creation of their modern state, as “Japan’s modern national identity has...always been

imagined in an asymmetrical totalizing triad between ‘Asia,’ ‘the West,’ and ‘Japan’” (Iwabuchi 7). Japan did not want to be lumped together with the rest of Asia, mostly due to the fact that the West viewed Asia in the Oriental sense: backwards, morally lacking, and weak enough to conquer. Fearing conquest, Japan sought to distance itself from Asia. But Japan did not want to totally westernize either, as the popular slogan from the time, “Expel the Barbarian,” reveals (*Before the Dawn* 253). However, modernity was often linked to Westernization, meaning that people in favor of learning western technologies often absorbed philosophy too, including Orientalist notions of Japan.

Orientalism also meant that feudal Japan was looked upon as a barbaric time, but when the United States came to Japan, Japan was by no means an underdeveloped country. As Naff writes in his introduction to Tōson’s *Before the Dawn*, “Although he was in no way prepared even to suspect it, Perry was visiting one of the world’s more advanced nations” (Naff xvi). Naff is examining criteria of science, math, astronomy, technology, and literacy. Besides this, “By the beginning of the eighteenth century, Edo was already the world’s largest city and Japan the most highly urbanized society in the world” (Naff xvii). Despite their advancements, the Americans still looked down on the Japanese. Part of the Japanese identity formed at the time was to prove that Japan was and could be equal, and even superior, to the Western powers.

One of the main ways Japan tried to define itself against the West was to draw on history and traditional values. The more foreign influence permeated society, the more feudal Japan was romanticized. Literature maps the struggle between traditional values and Westernization as authors struggled to explain the changes rocking society. Some, like Lafcadio Hearn, draw

entirely from the past. Others, like Tōson, critique traditional values as constrictive, but encouraged readers to draw national identity from them. How they depict the struggle between Japan and the West depends on the time period, as nationalist values ebb and swell with each generation.

### **Transnational Japanese authors**

This paper will examine transnational authors from different eras to follow the progression of ideas on Japanese nationalism as Japan developed its sense of self. The second chapter will cover the Meiji Era and authors Lafcadio Hearn and Sugimoto Estu.<sup>1</sup> Like other writers of the era, their writing reflects the changing attitudes of the Japanese as they opened up to the world. Lafcadio Hearn moved to Japan and published materials in English that allowed the West to see Japanese culture and traditions for the first time. However, Hearn is criticized for cultural appropriation of Japanese culture, by writers such as Said (Shamoon 204). As such, Hearn represents the ideas pushed onto Japan in Orientalism and the dichotomy created between East and West. Sugimoto offers a view of the United States through the eyes of a Japanese woman forced to move there for an arranged marriage. She writes from the migrant's perspective and as such finds her identity between nations. She still falls into the binary of Orientalism, however, as she draws distinct lines between Japan and the West.

The third chapter of the paper will cover Shimazaki Tōson, penname Tōson. Tōson bridges the gap between the Meiji Era and WWII not only because he writes about both, but because his writing echoes the *tenkō* movement which effected many writers of the time. Tōson created new

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<sup>1</sup> I use the Japanese convention for Japanese names, putting the surname first.

forms of Japanese literature by incorporating Western forms into the poetry and novels. But as Japan began to move towards Imperialism, he began to drift away from Western influence while simultaneously questioning the traditional structures of Japan.

Finally, the fourth chapter of the paper will cover post-war writers. Kazuo Ishiguro is one such modern author. Ishiguro moved to England when he was young, and depicts a constructed view of Japan based on his memories and imagining of what his home country represents. He counters Orientalist ideas that took root in England after WWII through the use of memory and generational conflict. Finally, the last author is Murakami Haruki. His writing is often lauded as global and culturally odorless, and has found fame all over the world. However, his writing contains many Japanese themes and deals with the economic changes that followed WWII. Murakami also offers an interesting discussion on language and translation, as he writes in Japanese, yet his work (translated) is popular in the English speaking world.

Taken together, the authors tell the story of the development of Japan as a nation state. From the Meiji Era to the present, Japan has had to fight off Western misconceptions of Japanese identity. In each era, the level of nationalism present in the country mirrors Japan's international relations, especially with the West. During WWII, for example, Japan followed an Imperialist ideology, and as such literature followed more national themes, drawing on traditional society for identity as opposed to Western technology. Writers like Hearn, Sugimoto, Tōson, Ishiguro, and Murakami echo the nationalist sentiments of their time period, allowing the reader to stitch together the story of the rise of Japanese national identity to the modern day.

## **CHAPTER II**

### **MEIJI ERA AUTHORS**

#### **Lafcadio Hearn: orientalism, Japan, and the world**

Because he constantly moved around as a child, Lafcadio Hearn's nationality is hard to define. He was born in Greece on the island of Levkas. His father was Irish and his mother Greek, but they both abandoned him early in his life, leaving him to grow up in Dublin with his great-aunt, Sarah Brenane. After that, he lived in London for a year due to family monetary issues, before moving to the United States at nineteen. About twenty years later, he moved to Japan, where he stayed for the remainder of his life. Due to his background, Lafcadio Hearn "could be described as one of the first multinational or transnational 'global citizens'" (Starrs 183). His family heritage and his education gave Hearn links to many nationalities:

His ancestry was Maltese on his mother's side and hence may be taken as a mixture of Phoenician, Arab, Norman, Spanish, and Italian; on his father's side it was Anglo-Irish with – Lafcadio liked to think – a touch of Romany. He learned to say his first prayers in Italian and demotic Greek. Adopted by a wealthy great-aunt, Sarah Brenane, he was educated by private tutors in Dublin and at Catholic schools in England and France. He was a British subject until he became a naturalized Japanese at the age of forty-six; but he always thought of himself as an American writer. (Cowley 2)

Hearn's unique transnational background granted him a unique perspective on cultures, one that bleeds through into his writing.

Due to his life as a global citizen, Hearn constantly felt like an outsider to society, a fear that plagued him until he moved to Japan. His feeling of not belonging stemmed partially from physical abnormalities: not only was he rather diminutive in stature, but he had lost an eye in a fight with a classmate as a child. One critic describes his appearance quite vividly, saying:

Hearn had felt himself to be marked off from the rest of mankind by his uneven eyes, one blind, marbled, and sunken in his skull, the other myopic and protruding, so that it looked like the single eye of an octopus. (Cowley 6)

His mixed heritage also contributed to his alienation. Since he was “foreign-born both geographically and ethnically, and feeling himself to be eternal outsider wherever he went” (Starrs 185), Hearn did not feel at home until he moved to Japan. Another critic goes as far to say that “Hearn had been oppressed by the feeling that he belonged nowhere” (King 11), making it seem like a rather dire condition.

Because of his own feelings of alienation, Hearn was often drawn to write about outsider groups. Before moving to Japan, Hearn found inspiration to write from the Creole culture in Louisiana. He felt sympathetic to their outsider status in American society and even married a woman from the community, though their marriage was short-lived and not recognized by the state because of anti-miscegenation laws. While in Louisiana, Hearn attempted to start his own magazine, *Ye Giglampz*, and wrote various standalone works like *Two Years in the French West Indies* (1890). However, Hearn did not remain in the United States forever as a magazine he wrote for eventually sent him to Japan.

Hearn is most known for his novels and essays on Japan, since he was one of the first authors to write about Japan for the West. He offered a new perspective on Japanese life, because he was from the West yet naturalized in Japan, and he often combines Japanese and Western ideas in his writings. In books like *Japan: An Attempt at Interpretation* and *Glimpses of an Unfamiliar Japan*, Hearn puts Japanese ideas in a Western framework to give his Western audience a better understanding the subject matter. However, like many writers of the day, due to his Western background Hearn often falls into the pit of Orientalism in his writing. Nevertheless, Hearn embodies transnationalism in his life and helped the West to understand Japan in a time when few books on Japan existed in the Western world.

#### *Hearn and Japan: a partially Orientalist view*

Many Western writers of the time period, including Hearn, fall into the pitfall of Orientalism. Orientalism defines the East both in the most romantic and the most barbaric senses, seeing it simultaneously as an exotic romantic place of fancy and a backwards land in need of civilizing. Hearn falls into Said's definition of Orientalism as he romanticizes Japan and describes the West as normative. His books were intended to be more academic and instruct Western readers in the ways and customs of the Japanese. However, he too falls into the pitfall of the dichotomy between East and West, defining Japan as the polar opposite of the normative West and bolstering the romanticized view of the Orient.

Some of the Western centric elements of Hearn's writings can be explained by his target audience; Hearn was writing for an English speaking Western, mainly American, audience. Hearn wrote in English, as his Japanese language skills were poor (Stemple 4). His work was



also published in the United States, and most of his essays “were usually written for publication in American periodicals” (2). Interestingly, his audience was the educated class, as shown by the allusions Hearn uses. He often makes references to Greek and Roman life, such as the *pater familias* and *patria potestas* (*Japan* 28), and assumes the reader understands his comparisons. He also ties unknown Japanese words to their Greek and Latin equivalents. For example, “The *ō-uji* corresponds in some degree to the Greek γένος or the roman *gens*” (70). He also leaves some sentences in untranslated French, expecting the readership to understand the language. The references and language choice point to the educated nature of Hearn’s Western readership. The prospective audience necessitates the Western focused nature of Hearn’s writing to some extent, since it has to cross the border from East to West.

However, Hearn often goes beyond simply catering to a Western audience to employing a strict dichotomy between East and West. Said mentions how “the imaginative examination of things Oriental was based more or less exclusively upon a sovereign Western consciousness out of whose unchallenged centrality an Oriental world emerged” (Said 8). Likewise, Hearn uses the West as normative, while Japan is the opposite. In his book *Japan: An Attempt at Interpretation*, Hearn sets the stage for the Western reader by stating how alien the Japanese appear to them, saying things like, “You will soon observe that even the physical actions of the people are unfamiliar” (*Japan* 11). He goes further to state that the Japanese are entirely backwards, as they favor the left instead of the right, “speak backwards, read backwards, write backwards” and even thread needles backwards (11). The use of backwards implies that the West is forwards and normative.

Besides Japanese customs, Hearn describes the physical characteristics of the people and land. In the beginning of a chapter entitled “Heiké-gani” (Heike crab), Hearn states:

In various countries of which the peoples appear strange to us, by reason of beliefs, ideas, customs, and arts having nothing in common with our own, there can be found something in the nature of the land – something in its flora or fauna – characterized by a corresponding strangeness. (*Kottō* 129)

In Hearn’s interpretation, everything in Japan is strange, from the customs to the flora and fauna. He goes on to describe the crabs as “possessing that very same quality of grotesqueness which we are accustomed to think of as being Japanese” (130). Again he shows a preference for Western views as he draws parallels between the Japanese and grotesqueness. Of course, Hearn does not find everything about Japan grotesque. On the contrary, he finds much of it to be charming. When Hearn compares Western and Japanese women, he ends with the conclusion that though Japanese women are not beautiful by Western standards, they have a sort of charm (395). From the very start of the book, Hearn establishes the strangeness of Japan to the Western readers, preparing them to be confused. Through the constant comparisons of the West and Japan, Hearn places Japan in a Western framework.

Hearn creates a binary between the customs and looks of the people of Japan and the West, but he stops short when comparing mental capacity. On one hand he claims, “The whole of the Japanese mental superstructure evolves into forms having nothing in common with Western psychological thought” (13). On the other hand, he goes on to say, “The ideas of this people are not our ideas; their sentiments are not our sentiments; their ethical life represents for us regions of thought and emotion yet unexplored, or perhaps long forgotten” (14). Hearn constantly uses

‘us’ vs ‘them’ language, furthering the divide between the East and West. However, note how he structures the above quote: he uses parallel structures to show the opposites between Japanese ideas and Western ideas, Japanese sentiments and Western sentiments, but when it comes to ethics Hearn changes his style. Instead of following his set sentence structure and saying that Japanese ethics are not our ethics, he claims their ethics are simply “regions of thought and emotion yet unexplored” (14). Hearn is not drawing the direct comparisons between East and West entirely, because to do so would imply that the Japanese are an uneducated group of heathens lacking ethics and civilization. His use of binary language marks him as an Orientalist in the sense of finding the opposites between East and West, but unlike many other Orientalists, he is not attempting to degrade the East.

Hearn’s respect for the Japanese way of thinking only extends so far, however. Despite his love for the people, “Hearn was strongly influenced by Spencer’s Theory of Social Evolution” (Fukuma 92). Spencer’s theory of evolution states that all societies are on an evolutionary scale, and as such, some societies are more evolved than others. The scale usually places the West as the most evolved, countries like Japan as in the middle, and countries in Africa as the least evolved. One of the more overt manifestations of Spenserian theory is Hearn’s near constant allusions to ancient Greece. In *Japan: An Attempt at Interpretation*, Hearn draws parallels between Greece and Japan, saying things like how Japan is “a civilization that can be termed imperfect only by those who would also term imperfect the Greek civilization of three thousand years ago” (*Japan* 13). When Hearn does find some similarities between Japan and the West, for example, “along certain general lines, the resemblances between domestic institutions in ancient

Europe and domestic institutions in the Far East can be clearly established” (67), he draws the comparison not between Japan and *modern* Europe, but Japan and *ancient* Europe.

On the other hand, Hearn’s ideas contain certain contractions regarding the level at which the Japanese stand on Spencer’s scale. He maintains that, “A civilization less evolved than our own, and intellectually remote from us, is not on that account to be regarded as necessarily inferior in all respects” (21). In other words, he believed that Japan was not inferior to the West, just less evolved. It’s a fine line. Hearn also drew a line between Old Japan and New Japan, as in the more Western Japan. As he starts to discuss superstitions in Japan, he states:

The popular religious ideas – especially the ideas derived from Buddhism – and the curious superstitions touched upon in these sketches are little shared by the educated classes of New Japan. Except as regards his characteristic indifference towards abstract ideas in general and metaphysical speculation in particular, the Occidentalized Japanese of to-day stands almost on the intellectual plane of the cultivated Parisian or Bostonian. (*Glimses* v-vi)

In other words, the educated urban classes of Japan are almost, but not quite, on the evolutionary level of the West. In his writings, Hearn supports the idea that Japan is separate from the West because their society is less evolved, but he also holds that they are getting closer to the West and, as such, are not to be looked down on.

Nevertheless, despite Hearn’s conviction that the educated classes of Japan are not superstitious and are more socially evolved, most of his books focus on folklore. The oddness of Japan continues in Hearn’s books of fairy tales, where he depicts Japan as a fairy land. Many of

Hearn's books, like *Kottō* and *Kwaidan*, contain collections of folk stories, mainly ghost stories. *Glimpses of an Unfamiliar Japan* continues the trend, describing everything Hearn sees not only as different, but as magical. Hearn writes, "Elfish everything seems; for everything as well as everybody is small, and queer, and mysterious" (*Glimpses* 2). In another book he says that, "Really you are happy because you have entered bodily into Fairyland, – into a world that is not, and never could be your own" (*Japan* 19). Again Japan is a far off place that one can visit but never stay and understand. He keeps the air of magic even when describing shops, saying, "The shopkeeper never asks you to buy; but his wares are enchanted, and if you once begin buying you are lost" (*Glimpses* 8-9). Finally, he compares Japan to a dream. In a Buddhist temple, he feels a strange sense of déjà-vu, claiming, "Doubtless because the forms before me...do not really appear to me as things new, but as things dreamed" (13). The people themselves seem dreamlike, and Hearn describes interacting with the people as such. He writes:

It is like the sensation of a dream in which people greet us exactly as we like to be greeted, and say to us all that we like to hear, and do for us all that we wish to have done, – people moving soundlessly through spaces of perfect repose, all bathed in vapoury light. (*Japan* 18)

Not only does Japan become a dreamscape in Hearn's vision, but the people take on a mythical light, literally. Hearn's many allusions to magic, dreams, and fairy lands further adds to the strangeness of Japan to the Western reader.

### *The hybridization of Orientalism*

Hearn maintains a position slightly separated from other Orientalists due to his feelings towards Japan. Hearn never embodies Said's third definition of Orientalism, the political definition where

the West wants to control and belittle the Orient. On the contrary, Hearn had a large degree of love for the nation. When he first came to the country, instead of coming with feelings of superiority, “He began with the assumption that he had come to this strange, remote country not as an arrogant teacher but a humble student” (King 8). As he grew his life there, becoming a teacher, marrying a Japanese woman, and eventually being adopted into a Japanese family, naturalizing, and taking on the Japanese name Koizumi Yakumo, Hearn came to love the nation. Malcolm Crowley, in his introduction to a collection of Hearn’s works, writes:

He knew Japan, not as an observer, but as a citizen, the adopted son of Japanese parents and the father of Japanese children. He knew the faults of his countrymen by adoption, although he preferred to emphasize their virtues when writing for Western magazines. (Crowley 14)

Likewise Francis King, in the introduction to Hearn’s *Writings from Japan*, claims:

The Japanese gratefully recognized in him someone who loved and respected them, who cherished their traditions, who embraced their way of life, and who had none of the Westerner’s usual eager, clumsy proposals for their improvement. (King 8)

Hearn’s acceptance from the Japanese themselves marks how he differed from other Western writers of the day. In Hearn’s time, Japan was still distrustful of outsiders and often saw foreigners as threats to the Japanese way of life. Hearn, on the other hand, like many Japanese, believed that, “Western-derived philosophies, ideologies and religions were fundamentally incomparable with Japanese culture and therefore posed a danger to its survival” (Starrs 191). He did not want to impose Western ideas onto the Japanese; he wanted the Japanese to impose their ideas on him.

Japan's acceptance of Hearn marks another phenomenon: Japan's internalization of the Orientalist dichotomy. Critic Yoshiaki Fukuma in his article "Representations of 'the West,' 'Japan,' and 'the Periphery' in the Discourse of Lafcadio Hearn Studies," examines the relationship between not only Japan and the West, but something called the Periphery. Japan's Periphery is Old Japan, the distilled Japan as defined when taken into comparison with the West – rural countryside. According to Fukuma, in his writings about folklore and the bygone days of feudal Japan, Hearn is actually depicting Peripheries, not Japan (Fukuma 102). Since the Japanese loved Hearn, and studied his works, "Japan' internalized 'the West's' viewpoint through Hearn, and became an entity that could describe 'the Periphery' separately" (97). Orientalism is a tricky concept, because sometimes people of the Orient will accept the romanticized view of their nation as propagated by the West. Fukuma suggests that this very thing happened to Japan through Hearn. The Old Japan that Hearn depicted became the ideal Japan the nation tried to emulate, and "Thus did 'Japan' depict 'the Periphery' in this form and yet paradoxically it attempted to identify with 'the Periphery,' the more the differences between the two manifested" (97). Hearn's writings took on a life of their own, becoming to the people of Japan important works on Japanese culture, just as the works instructed the West on Japanese culture. Through Hearn's writing, the romanticized view of Japan's Periphery permeated into Japanese society, internalizing some features of Orientalist romanticism into Japanese culture.

Hearn's writing of fairy tales also represents a move into hybridism of culture, a rather transnational notion. Koichi Iwabuchi coined a term called "strategic hybridism," which describes the "appropriation, domestication, and indigenization of the foreign (predominantly associated with the West) in a way that reinforces an exclusivist notion of Japanese

national/cultural identity” (Iwabuchi 53). In his book *Recentring Globalization: Popular Culture and Japanese Transnationalism*, Iwabuchi describes the concept in great detail as it applies to Japan. Japan is a center of strategic hybridism, as they often domesticate foreign elements. However, hybridism is different from hybridity; hybridism means domestication but hybridity means translation, which retains more of the original meaning. Hearn’s works of folklore are actually hybridism. With the help of his students and his Japanese wife, Hearn collected many folktales. In particular, his wife would often retell stories to Hearn, which Hearn would then transform into written works. His work then, was more than the transcribing of stories from old volumes. While:

He described his work as translation, but it was more than that, as became apparent when similar tales were merely translated by others. The result in their case was folklore for the laboratory, preserved in formaldehyde, whereas Hearn’s version was literature. (Cowley 15)

Hearn acted like the Japanese Grimm Brothers in how he collected stories and reworked them for the modern (and foreign) reader. Thus, although he considered himself an American writer and wrote for the West, his works were Japanese. His ideas were also Japanese; *Japan: An Attempt at Interpretation* is very much a product of its day, and “there is very little...that would seem out of place in the works of the leading Japanese nationalist writers of the day” (Starrs 190). Hearn himself was subject to hybridism and it is reflected in his writing, which became more and more Japanese the more he lived in the nation.

Hearn’s hybridism helped to shape the image of Japan that was subsequently sent out to the West. While today Hearn’s writing are mostly studied in Japan, “during his lifetime Hearn was



relatively unknown in Japan but already a widely celebrated author in the West” (182). Hearn’s immense popularity in the West gave him the unique position of teaching the West about Japan. In subsequent years, Japan used Hearn’s studies to promote Japanese identity. One critic even goes as far as to say that as the Japanese government phased out Western education leading up to WWII, the only reason they kept various English literature, including Hearn studies, was “for the sake of promoting ‘Japan’s’ *self* to the *other* known as ‘the West’” (Fukuma 99). In some circles, Hearn even gained the title of “Ambassador of Japan to the world” (98). Because he was one of the first transnational Japanese authors, his works provided invaluable insight into Japanese life for the West. He wrote from the Western perspective, allowing his audience to better understand the subject matter, as he explained many things that a native Japanese person would take for granted.

Hearn remains one of the first transnational writers about Japan, but also a product of the time period, the Meiji Era. The Meiji Era itself embodies many transnational themes, as Japan learnt about and incorporated many Western ideals into its lifestyle. Hearn mentions the changes brought about by the Meiji Restoration, mainly the influence of the West in the nation. Like many Japanese authors of the day, and the era directly after, Hearn mourns the loss of Old Japan. Hearn identifies the spirit of Japan in what he refers to as Old Japan several times in his writings. He contrasts Old Japan with the Western influence on the nation, and eventually, “when his first enthusiasm [for Japan] had vanished, he transferred his approbation to feudal Japan, and, like Miniver Cheevy, mourned that he had been born too late” (Stemple 3). His preference towards Old Japan shows in works like *Japan: An Attempt at Interpretation*, which, despite being about Japan as a whole, focuses on feudal Japan. He even adds a small disclaimer that, “Of course the

conditions of which I speak are now passing away” (*Japan* 17). Like later Japanese authors like Tōson, he heavily romanticizes the past feudal age and laments various losses from the past. But despite the changes, Hearn believes the spirit of Japan remains, “and the supreme interest of the old Japanese civilization lies in what it expresses of the race-character, – that character which yet remains essentially unchanged by all the changes of Meiji” (*Japan* 22). Hearn attempts to define Japan on the old ways of life, before the great changes of the Meiji Restoration.

Hearn wrote during a time of great change for Japan, when Japan struggled to define itself against the West. His writings and the comparisons he made between Japan and the West highlights Japan’s struggle to westernize while retaining national identity. The focus on the Western perspective, however, far from impeding the importance of his work, enabled his Western audience to better understand Japanese life. His works played a vital role in explaining Japan to the West, and helping Japan later define its identity. As a transnational writer, Hearn was able to do what other Japanese writers of the time could not easily do: connect Japan with the West.

### **Sugimoto and migrational binationalism**

Sugimoto Estu was born in Japan to an old Samurai family and moved to the United States due to an arranged marriage. Her novel, *A Daughter of the Samurai*, contains autobiographical facts and reflects her life in many aspects. While Hearn uses folk lore and essays to explain Japan to the West, Sugimoto uses personal experience. As a migrant, her work shows many features of migration studies and dual nationalism. She occupies a space between nations, as she has to navigate her identity in each nation she lives in. As an occupier of the in-between space, she easily connects to both Japanese and American audiences, allowing her to teach America about

Japanese culture from a partially American perspective. Americans received her novel well, and it “played a vital educational role among ordinary people” (Hirakawa 399). Like Hearn, the West was her intended audience, as she had a “conscious aim of explaining Japanese life to Westerners, particularly Americans” (400). Sugimoto’s novel gave Americans a new understanding of Japan, but still draws a line between Japan and the United State, and is more bi-national than transnational.

Migration studies is a subset of transnational studies, as migrants offer personal stories of identity within multiple countries. By moving between countries, migrants feel disconnected to their homeland while feeling simultaneously alienated from their new nation, and this “deterritoization stimulates migrants’ memory and imagination, such that they feel betwixt and between” (Mahler 77). Vertovec calls this a “diaspora consciousness.” He says:

‘Diaspora consciousness’ is marked by dual or multiple identifications. Hence there are depictions of individuals’ awareness of de-centered attachments, of being simultaneously ‘home away from home’, ‘here and there’ or, for instance, British and something else. (Vertovec 6)

The autobiographical form allows the main character of Sugimoto’s novel, Etsu-bo, to act as the bridge between Japan and the United States. Etsu-bo “crosses borders and, rather than assimilating with the adopted culture, molds it to her indigenous expectations and values” (*Diasporic* 61). By doing this, Etsu-bo becomes neither Japanese nor American, but something in between. Etsu-bo herself notices the development of her hybrid culture when she says, “My attempts to combine the old and the new frequently resulted in my having to give up the combination and decide wholly in favour of one or the other” (Sugimoto 265). She is unable to

assimilate one culture into the other, so she ends up picking and choosing aspects of both that fit her identity. She becomes a true bi-national, picking up and embodying parts of two cultures, combining Japan and the United States within herself.

*A Daughter of the Samurai*'s form also exemplifies bi-nationalism and migrants' struggle to find identity. Sugimoto combines the writing styles of Japan and the United States. The main structure of the story is the Japanese I-novel, a form similar to the Western autobiography. An autobiography is fact mixed with some fiction, but in an I-novel the story is fiction mixed with some autobiographical facts (Hirakawa 397). In the case of *A Daughter of the Samurai*, the story actually combines the stories of "a Japanese woman Etsu Inagaki Sugimoto and an American Woman Miss Florence Mills Wilson" (Kugisima 142). Although only Sugimoto's name is used, her autobiography differs from the story of the main character, Etsu-bo, in many ways. Japanese novels also differ from their Western counterparts as they do not always contain the parts of a story Westerners come to expect, such as a defined climax. But while Sugimoto's novel mainly draws from the Japanese literary tradition, she also uses some American styles, such as "the American immigrant autobiography" (*Diasporic* 61). Like American immigrant autobiographies, Etsu-bo tells the story of her immigration over to the United States, her struggles fitting in, and the feelings of freedom the country provides. Her struggle to fit into the American community, and then to reintegrate into Japanese society, places her in between cultures. Without only one national culture, Etsu-bo must create a new migrant identity. Sugimoto combines the American immigrant style successfully with the Japanese I-novel, integrating two sides to create a new genre of literature; both styles draw on autobiography to tell of the migrants uncertain national identity.

In Etsu-bo's migration story, Sugimoto also attempts to bridge the gap between Japanese and American readers. Unlike Hearn, she does not believe that Japanese and American cultures are polar opposites. Instead she mentions their similarities several times. After Etsu-bo moves to the United States, she says, "I had been learning more clearly each day that America was very like Japan" (Sugimoto 206). Later she comments, "How alike are the two sides of the world! (265). Etsu-bo comes to see that Americans and Japanese are similar in many aspects. In doing so, Sugimoto is able to make the American reader understand Japanese culture better, and hopefully be less apt to write-off Japan as odd and backwards.

Like Hearn, Sugimoto also offers direct points of contrast between Japan and the West. But unlike Hearn, Sugimoto sees America from the Japanese perspective, instead of Japan through the Western perspective. Through the character Etsu-bo, Sugimoto points out the irony of misunderstanding, saying:

I began to understand, with sympathy, something of the problem in Japan of Americans trying to understand the Japanese, which heretofore I had looked upon only as the problem of Japanese trying to understand Americans. (200)

Understanding is a two way street, and Sugimoto gently points out that the West confuses Japan as much as Japan confuses the West. Using this method, she is able to ask the reader to see the other side, the Japanese side, and see that they are more similar than not.

In flipping perspective, Sugimoto also plays with the stereotypes the Japanese have against Americans. She uses humor to point out the stereotypes, telling stories like how the people in her town thought that in America, "the master of a lordly house often entertained guests by

cutting up a cooked eagle in their presence” (62). She also points out how prejudice works when there is nothing to contradict it, saying:

There was nothing definite in my mind against America, but I was so constantly hearing allusions to the disagreeable experiences of almost all persons who had dealing with foreigners that I had a vague feeling of distaste for the unknown land.  
(62)

Despite never having been to the United States, she begins the story with a dislike for the land simply because of the stories she had heard. Since her audience mostly consists of Americans, the passage serves to ask the reader if he or she dislikes Japan simply because of hearsay. Sugimoto softly breaks down prejudice between Japan and the West by asking readers to reevaluate the knowledge they have of Japan.

A major part of the conflict between Japanese and Western identities comes from the influx of Western ideas brought by the Meiji Restoration. Sugimoto directly addresses changes of the Meiji Era in small anecdotes, showing how the new ideas pervaded into everyday life. One example comes from food changes. Growing up, Etsu-bo did not eat meat, as it was against her religion, a branch of Buddhism. However, when her father grew sick, he goes to a doctor who uses Western medicinal ideas. Sugimoto writes:

The wise physician who follows the path of the Western barbarians has told his that the flesh of animals will bring strength to his weak body, and also will make the children robust and clever like the people of the Western sea. (27)

The change seems small, but it has great meaning for the family. They shut up the family shrine so none of the impure meat could influence the spirits. The dinner is a serious, family affair, and

the grandmother refuses to eat with them, leaving her usual place of honor empty. Nevertheless, Etsu-bo comments positively on the event, saying that, “The introduction of foreign food helped greatly to break down the wall of tradition which shut our people away from the world of the West” (27). The incident shows how in the Meiji Era, Western ideas entered into the everyday, wreaking great changes.

*A Daughter of a Samurai* also embodies Japan’s feelings about the West in general. At the time Sugimoto wrote the novel, Japan was still in the Meiji Era. Japan’s fascination with the West reached its peak, as the country tried to modernize as quickly as possible. One critic, Georgina Dodge, says:

Sugimoto’s preoccupations with America and the West directly reflect those of her natal country during the latter nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, when many Japanese became dissatisfied with the indigenous culture and (especially among the educated elite) turned to Christianity. (62)

Etsu-bo, like many Japanese dissatisfied with the time, converted to Christianity. She also comes to embody ideals like “equality and individualism,” ideals only just taking root in Japan (*Diasporic* 63). Through *A Daughter of the Samurai*, Sugimoto captures the feelings of the Meiji Era, specifically the turmoil between Japanese and Western ideals occurring in Japan at the time.

*A Daughter of a Samurai* is not without critique; after she settles into her life in the United States, Etsu-bo begins to see the downsides of idyllic America. Mainly, Etsu-bo begins to see the depth of American materialism, ignorance, and prejudice. As the story goes on, “she betrays some annoyance at her neighbors’ ignorance of Japanese culture and their materialistic focus. She also

begins to appreciate the depth of her home country's commitment to ceremony and ritual" (Honey 481). The fact that she is the only Japanese woman in the town also highlights her neighbors' ignorance as she struggles to explain life in Japan. When she moved to the United States, she thought it was a place of individuality and freedom, but "she comes to see that racism...makes her an exotic other, a permanently marginalized woman" (482). Sugimoto addresses the racism through Etsu-bo's annoyance at her neighbors, thus disguising the criticism. However, she still manages to include a critique of American racism.

Sugimoto also uses femininity as a point of comparison between Japan and the United States. First, Etsu-bo comments on love and how the Japanese view love as a duty. She starts by saying that Japanese and American girls are similar, yet goes on to contrast love and duty. She says:

The hearts of Japanese girls are no different from those of girls of other countries, but for centuries, especially in samurai homes, we had been strictly trained to regard duty, not feeling, as the standard of relations between man and woman....The impression I received was that love as pictured in the Western books was interesting and pleasant, sometimes beautiful in the sacrifice like that of Enoch Arden; but not to be compared in strength, nobility, or loftiness of spirit to the affection of parent for child, of the loyalty between lord and vassal.

(Sugimoto 131)

Etsu-bo concludes that the love between a parent and child, or a lord and vassal, is markedly different from the love that appears in Western discourse. Through her use of positive words like strength and nobility to describe Japanese love, she argues that Japanese love is stronger than its



Western counterpart. Through this passage, Sugimoto draws a point of comparison, allowing the reader to see a cultural difference between Japan and the United States in a subtle way.

Sugimoto also compares the relative freedoms of the women in Japan and the United States.

After staying in the United States for a while, Etsu declares:

I came to realize that tragic truth that the Japanese woman – like the plum blossom, modest, gentle, and bearing unjust hardship without complaint – is often little else than a useless sacrifice; while the American woman – self-respecting, untrammelled, changing with quick adaptability to new conditions – carries inspiration to every heart because her life, like the blossom of the cherry, blooms in freedom and naturalness. (139)

Etsu-bo harshly decries the treatment of women in Japan when she calls them a “useless sacrifice” (139). She notes how women are treated unfairly, calling their hardships “unjust” (139). American women, however, she compares to cherry blossoms, the symbol of Japan. She comments on the naturalness of the American woman – something she does not exist in Japanese women. Later, she asks her American friend, “Did you ever think of a Japanese woman as being in prison with the key to her cell in her pocket; and not unlocking the door because it would not be a polite thing to do?” (188). Etsu-bo points out how Japanese women are locked up, not through natural means, but through the chains of politeness. Sugimoto’s East-West comparison draws attention to the plight of women in Japan and critiques traditional gender dynamics.

At the same time, Sugimoto knows that Western women do not all have freedom. While she calls Japanese women useless sacrifices, she also knows that “the traditions that limit women’s social

participation in Japan also protect their status within the home, where they rule unobtrusively” (*Laughter* 63). Unlike in Japan, in the United States women have no control over money. Instead they have to beg their husbands, sometimes stooping to trickery, to receive any money, which severely limits their freedom (Sugimoto 178). Besides this, American women do not always have respect from the men in their society. Unlike in Japan, “American women enjoy greater social freedom, but find themselves the targets of male humor rather than recipients of respect” (*Laughter* 63-4). Sugimoto draws sharp comparisons between women of Japan and the United States, but her comments on both alerts the reader to the suffering of women worldwide. Sugimoto uses her transnational experience to point out the failings in the treatment of women in both societies.

Sugimoto draws many comparisons between Japan and the United States through Etsu-bo, ultimately creating a character that is neither nationality. Etsu-bo returns to Japan for a while, but, unable to readjust to the strict social conditions, she returns to the United States. Even within the United States, she retains her Japanese identity. The novel embodies the spirit of migration studies and diasporic identity in many aspects, from the main character to the plot. The binational nature of the story ultimately allows Sugimoto to sell the story to an American audience and explain Japanese culture, and decry prejudice, within the media of the novel.

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## **CHAPTER III**

### **SHIMAZAKI TŌSON AND THE PRE-WAR ERA**

Tōson was born on March 2, 1872 as Shimazaki Haruki. He took on the penname Tōson when he began writing and quickly rose to the forefront of Japanese writers. In poetry, he helped found the Japanese Romantic and Naturalist movements. In literature, he became the champion of the I-novel, a Japanese form that gained popularity arguably because of him. But while he embodies the quintessential Japanese novelist, Tōson also represents the first truly transnational Japanese author as he incorporated Western literary forms into Japanese ones, creating new Japanese styles. He also dealt with the changes of the Meiji Era in his novels, especially how to react to the influx of changes brought on by the West. From the end of the Meiji Era to the late 1920s, modernity was often equated to Westernization. Tōson's works map the battle within Japan between the pro-Imperialist and pro-Westernization forces in the time leading up to WWII, when many in Japan wanted to go back to conservative traditional values. His works reflect Japan's changing ideology after leading up to the war. As a transnational author, Tōson embodies Japan's struggle between traditionalism and western modernity.

#### **Combining Japanese and Western literary traditions**

Although most famous for his novels, Tōson actually began his career as a poet during the budding Japanese Romantics movement. Though he only wrote poetry for about four years, he left a lasting impact on Japanese poetry as a whole, and typifies many of the themes present in his later novels. James R. Morita in his article on Tōson's poetic career writes:

His contribution to the development of modern Japanese poetry was also substantial. Through his springtime and his departure from it, along with his longing for love and his bitterness from love, Tōson brought his ‘romantic spirit’ to maturity, creating a solid formation of both content and style on which other poets based their work. Those four years were the formative period of modern Japanese poetry. (Morita 369)

Many critics hail Tōson as the creator of modern Japanese poetry and one of the main creators of “‘new-style poetry’ (*shintaiishi*) that introduced novel themes, vocabulary, and forms into Japanese poetry” (Bourdagh 5). He did this by playing around with the Japanese style in various ways, like finding unique ways of breaking up the lines within the 757 verse form (Roggendorf 45). But one of the main ways he changed Japanese poetry was to incorporate Western forms and concepts into his work. His poem “*Hakuji kahei no fu*” (Ode to a White Porcelain Vase) is highly reminiscent of Keats’s “Ode on a Grecian Urn”; Likewise *Natsukusa* (Summer Grass) references Whitman’s *Leaves of Grass*. The incorporation of Western forms into Japanese literature would continue throughout Tōson’s life, from his poetry to his novels, becoming more pronounced in his writing as he created a new Japanese style and set a new standard for Japanese literature.

Western literary forms influenced Tōson early in his life. As a child, he attended the Mita English School and the missional school, Meiji Gakuin (Roggendorf 43). There he was introduced to English literature and Christianity, a religion he would join briefly and even become baptized into, but did not remain with for long. After school, he retained his fascination with Western literature. While working at a store for imported goods, “He was more interested in reading the English translation of Taine’s *History of English Literature*, which he concealed

under his desk at the store” (Seigle viii). Tōson found in the West a rich literary tradition, specifically in writers like “Byron, Burns, Shakespeare, Matthew Arnold, Wordsworth, and Milton” (viii). With these poets as his teacher, Tōson grew attached to the Japanese Romantic Movement. He became a contemporary of Kitamura Tōkoku, one of the founders of the Movement, and soon overshadowed the other writers of the era:

With Tōkoku and his group we are in the presence of real poetic genius inspired, no doubt, by the contact with the Western literary tradition but not overwhelmed by it to the extent of losing touch with an indigenous heritage. Of Tōkoku’s work very little is left; the other friends were soon overshadowed by the young Tōson who embodied their aspiration and also became the chronicler of the movement in his novel *Spring*. (Roggendorf 45)

By combining Western romanticism with Japanese forms, Tōson created an entirely new form of Japanese literature. Tōson is arguably the first transnational Japanese writer, as he combined Japanese and Western forms while retaining his Japanese spirit.

As a result of influences from the West, it is no surprise that when Tōson sat down to write his first novel *The Broken Commandment* (*Hakai*) he wrote with Western forms in mind. The book incorporates “several Western literary models, notably the Rousseau of *Confessions* and Dostoevsky’s *Raskolnikov*” (Strong xxii), and also used *Crime and Punishment* as a major influence. Kenneth Strong, in his translator’s introduction to *The Broken Commandment*, goes as far as to draw direct parallels between the two works, equating characters, “Ushimatsu with Raskolnikov, Keinoshin with Marmeladov, Ginnosuke with Rasmihin, Bunpei with Rugin, O-Shio with Sonia” (xxii). As a result, “*Hakai* won acclaim from both the literary world and the

public as the first modern Japanese novel comparable to those of Europe” (Seigle xi). By combining Western and Japanese forms, *The Broken Commandment* not only became Japan’s first modern novel, but Japan’s first transnational novel. It broke the boundaries of Japanese literature, finding influence from multiple cultural traditions.

As Tōson moved towards other novels, he began to drift away from the Japanese Romantic movement, instead finding solace in the new Japanese Naturalism. Japanese Naturalism “dealt with the miseries of life such as Zola described: hereditary vice, drunkenness, deformity, disease, and all forms of animal instinct” (xx), and as such “quickly degenerated into an unhealthy preoccupation with the sordid aspects of life, for the sake of their sordidness” (Roggendorf 49). Tōson’s preoccupation with the sordid details of life pervades his novels, especially *The Broken Commandment*, *The Family (Ie)*, and *Spring (Haru)*. *The Broken Commandment* is celebrated as “the first masterpiece of Japanese naturalism” (Bourdages 48), while *The Family* “has been designated his best naturalistic work and masterpiece of Japanese naturalism” (Seigle xix). Tōson’s influence codified the Naturalist movement, sparking a new genre of Japanese literature.

From his poetry to his novels, Tōson broke new ground for Japanese literature. His poetry, though only written over a four year span, created the *shintaiishi* poetry and exemplified the Japanese Romantic movement. His novels were equally groundbreaking, helping to start the Japanese Naturalist movement. Because of his work, Tōson is the first truly transnational Japanese author. He drew influence from the West, countries like England, France, and Russia, but never lost sight of his Japanese heritage. He combined all the countries’ literary forms to

create a new form of literature, a transnational Japanese literature that retained its Japanese traditions.

### **Thematic transnationalism and facing the changes of the Meiji Era**

Besides creating new forms of literature, Tōson also dealt with the transition from the Meiji Era to Imperialist Japan. Like writers of the Meiji Era, Tōson attempted to explain the transition from traditional society to modern, from pure Japanese society to the incorporation of Western culture. By the time Tōson began writing the revolutions of the Meiji had ended, the shogun had lost power, and the Emperor had been reinstated in Kyoto. However, the new generation was still learning how Japan fit in the world. Through his early novels, specifically *The Broken Commandment* and *The Family*, Tōson shifted his focus from Romanticism to Naturalism. He examined the interaction of traditional Japan and Westernization, and in doing so defined Japaneseness for the generation that came after the Meiji Era.

#### *The Broken Commandment: an attempt at a modern novel*

In his first novel, *The Broken Commandment*, Tōson tackled the nebulous concepts of modernity and prejudice. The novel was published in 1906, when the Meiji Era was winding down. By then, the shock of the West opening Japan had dwindled, as had the initial awe at the West's technology. *The Broken Commandment* lies at the cusp of the change from the Meiji Era; Tōson purposely tried to create a modern Western novel, which shows in the Western forms present in *The Broken Commandment*, as discussed in the previous section. However, thematically, the themes of the novel showcase ideas that Tōson would strengthen in his later works. Tōson still admired Western forms of literature and one of the main themes of the novel, prejudice, is

transnational in scope, but the connections to the transnational themes remain haphazard at best, especially in relation to the end of the novel. The story also shows a fledgling obsession with the past that would become more prevalent in later novels. While in *The Broken Commandment* the West is viewed as an escape from the prejudice in Japan, later novels would come to distrust the modernity of the West and find solace in traditional Japanese society.

*The Broken Commandment* tells the story of Ushimatsu, a member of the *burakumin* or *eta* class, the lowest strata in society. Near the start of the novel, Ushimatsu's father commands him to hide his true class so he can be part of society. However, at the end of the story Ushimatsu decides to reveal himself because he felt he was lying to society, and then flees to the United States to set up a new life. On one hand, the theme of discrimination against the *eta* class is a purely Japanese one, as it involves the history of the country and the class itself as workers in typically unsanitary jobs, like butchers and tanners. However, some critics like Saburo Sato maintain that by tackling the theme of discrimination, "Tōson was tackling a grand theme that extended far beyond the confines of Japan's borders in order to reach a transnational dimension" (Sato 92). Sato classifies the novel as diasporic literature because of international themes, and the decision to leave Japan for the United States at the end of the story. He writes,

Whether intentionally or subconsciously, Tōson structured his plot in empathy with the anguish of discriminated and persecuted peoples. As a result, he succeeded in creating a novel unlike any other in Japan until his time, one replete with diasporic perspectives. (Sato 93)

Tōson himself mentions international suffering in the novel with statements like, "If there were no racial prejudice, there would have been no massacre of the Jews at Kishinev, no talk in the



West of a ‘yellow peril’” (*Broken Commandment* 12). The novel remains mostly Japanese in scope, but his fixation on suffering and prejudice shows an awareness of international issues. The way Tōson mentions suffering elsewhere in the world connect the suffering of the *eta* to global discrimination. The novel’s theme thus expands beyond the boards of Japan, making the novel’s themes transnational.

The fixation on Texas at the end of the novel also shows an international consciousness, though the fact that Tōson uses the United States as an escape does not offer a solution to the *eta*’s problems faced within Japan. Ushimatsu, after revealing his true origins and facing ostracization from society, is offered a surprise solution at the end of the novel: Ohinata, a character that had disappeared from the story line for most of the novel, reappears to tell Ushimatsu of “a ‘Japanese village’ in Texas, and of some young men from Kita-Sakuma who had gone to work there” (245). The move to Texas is described as “a bold and risky new venture overseas, in Texas” (245), but one worth the risk for a “new start abroad” (245). In the eyes of the novel, Texas offers a land free from prejudice for *eta*. However, the novel fails to address the prejudice immigrants faced in the United States, especially at the time when the West feared the Yellow Peril. The decision to move to Texas offers an escape for the characters, but creates a romanticized view of the United States. The romantization of the United States is reminiscent of transnational writing from the previous era, which often glorified the West at the expense of the East. The inclusion of Texas showcases Tōson attempt to create a modern novel with some transnational themes, but the novel remains firmly Japanese, and the outside world, especially the United States, remains romanticized.

*The Broken Commandment* also displays Tōson's fascination with societal deterioration, an idea he would expand upon in further novels. As the first Japanese Naturalist novel, the plot focuses on some of the grittier aspects of life, mainly through descriptions of the prejudice Ushimatsu and the *eta* face. However, Tōson also begins to write about how Japan changes in modern times by moving away from tradition. For example, Keinoshin, an old samurai, laments:

Then I was sent to Edo City, till the Restoration, that is. What changes there've been! Change, change – look at the castle ruins down by the river. What do you and your generation think of those stone walls, or what's left of them?... Almost every castle you go to, it's the same; nothing but a few ruins, and mulberry trees planted where the samurai used to drill. (47)

Keinoshin mourns the loss of the past, which is an inversion of the other themes in the novel; Ushimatsu wants to move away from the tradition of prejudice towards the *eta*, and move towards modern equality, as represented by Texas. In later novels, Tōson expands on the theme of loss, mourning the loss of the traditional values while, at the same time critiquing them for being constrictive. *The Broken Commandment* hints at themes that would dominate Tōson's later work: the idea that civilization degenerates as it forgets the old ways.

*The Broken Commandment* marks the end of Tōson's romantic view of the world and begins his decent into naturalism. In the novel, Tōson lauds the west by copying its literary forms, and using The United States as a symbol of freedom from prejudice. In many ways Tōson's first novel was the first modern Japanese novel. However, Tōson's ideas changed as time went on. *The Broken Commandment* ends with a message of hope found in foreign ideas, a concept missing from later works. In many ways, this idea mirrors the views of the Meiji Era, when

Japan looked to Western ideas to modernize. After accepting Orientalist views of Japan's inferiority to the West, as seen in writers like Lafcadio Hearn, Japan saw the West as a beacon of modernity and hope. But after the Meiji Restoration, there was a pushback to traditional Japanese values, away from Western influence. Likewise as Japan moves further away from the Meiji Era, Tōson takes on a darker, grittier view of reality.

*The Family (1910-1): pessimist view of traditional structures*

*The Family (Ie)* tells the story of the slow decline of two families, the Koizumi and Hashimoto clans. The novel acts as an autobiography of sorts, as the two families represent the real Shimazaki and Takase clans. *The Family* is part of a series of I-novels documenting Tōson's life: *Spring (Haru)* and *New Life (Shinsei)* complete the story. As the title of the work suggests, throughout *The Family* Tōson examines the family as a structure. In many ways, family acts as a microcosm of nationalism issues. Religiously and philosophically, the Japanese family has a place in the power structure of Japan, from Shinto ancestor worship to Confucianism. The nation itself is a giant family too; The Emperor acts as the father of the nation. In *The Family*, Tōson takes the metaphor of the family literally, using the declining family structure to critique the oppressive nature of the traditional Japanese family while defining the degenerative nature of the modern household, as exemplified by the Western family. The families in the story attempt to escape their traditions yet find identity and solace in the past. The contradiction echoes sentiments in Japan from the time; Japan wanted to Westernize, modernize, and throw off tradition, yet looked to its past for identity.

It was no coincidence that Tōson chose to write about family structures in 1910. His discontent with the old ways echoes the sentiment of intellectuals from the time. As the Meiji Era came to a close, and new movements of thought arose and:

The old family system, as the arch-embodiment as well as the base and buttress of the cultural, social and political system of traditional China and Japan, was one of the first structures to come under the assault of the new intellectuals, whose celebration of individualism was diametrically opposed to the oppressive, collective emphasis of traditional society. (Li 114)

Celebration of the individual actually came from Western philosophy and Christianity. In the naturalist movement, which Tōson took part in, “Christianity brought many young poets and writers to a new consciousness of self, of the individual as distinct from nature and the divine, hence to a new respect for individuality” (Seigle xx). *The Family*, as a Naturalist novel, celebrates individualism in various ways. Most of the discontent with traditional family values stems from the suppression of individualism. The pull towards individualism creates a pull towards Western individualist family dynamics. However, the fight between traditional and new ideas is not clear cut, and Tōson’s novel still questions if the new way is the right way. In *The Family*, Tōson begins to move away from the idea prevalent in *The Broken Commandment*: that the past only hurts the present.

However, Tōson does still critique the other system in various ways throughout the novel. Various characters, especially the protagonist Sankichi, carry discontent with the old system. Sankichi wishes to leave the main house and “to establish his own house on a simple scale” (*The Family* 43). Other characters too, like Shota, note the destructive nature of the traditional family,

stating that, “The oppressive atmosphere of his family watching his every move had become intolerable” (16). In other words, the communal rigidity of the traditional family was one of the main sources of oppression. Sankichi, in his role of third son, is expected to play a certain role in the family that he cannot escape from. He cannot be his own individual; he has to be the third son, and fulfill all the tasks that come with that role, from filial to spousal duties. Sankichi, especially in the beginning of the novel, condemns the traditional family, and attempts to create his own, simpler version.

The feeling of oppression is reinforced by a theme of degeneration pervasive throughout the novel. In her introduction to *The Family*, Cecilia Seigle writes:

Tōson holds that any family of long lineage inevitably produces characteristics that make degeneration and financial disintegration a certitude. He presents two kinds of degeneration. One involves certain acquired, psychological characteristics...impracticality, pride, gullibility...traits that militated against an ability to cope with the changing realities of life. The other is moral degeneration; to Tōson, one important manifestation of bad blood was moral weakness. (Seigle xxiv-xxv)

The family degenerates in many ways as they lose their fortunes and turn to vice. The main household has to move into smaller and poorer houses as business ventures fail one after another. Tatsuo inherits his father’s womanizing ways and runs away with a Geisha, abandoning his wife and children. The degeneration seems to pass through the generations, adding to the oppressive nature of the family by stating that one cannot escape their relations. Even when characters attempt to leave the family, degenerative traits are inherited and taken along.

Scenes within the novel also hint at the declining present through symbols. In one scene, Tōson writes:

After so many relocations scarcely any furniture was left from the opulent past. Otane found some calligraphy of her father's mounted as a scroll on the wall of the back room. Tadahiro's spirit seemed to lie only in it, watching the declining fortunes of the family. (*The Family* 132)

The spirit of the past literally watches the declining fortunes of the family through the dead father, Tadahiro. The scene shows not only the decline of the present, but the pervasive presence of a past that continues to watch and condemn them. Sankichi also talks about the decline when:

He called in his nieces so that they might hear the tales of vicissitude and learn how the character of Tokyo was changing; how ancient Edo with its shadowy storage buildings and its indigo curtains typical of Edo stores was disappearing, was rapidly becoming things of the past; how the mother of a famous store large store owner who had lived in such unprecedented splendor when Sankichi was a houseboy in Naoki's house, was now destitute, adding to the sorrow of her old age. (187)

Again, the passage glorifies the past to draw attention to the destitution of the present. Wealth and splendor are disappearing, leaving a pale imitation of the past in its wake. Since the traditional family also represents traditional Japan, it is as if Japan itself is fading.

The degeneration of the family only makes Sankichi's ultimate choice to respect the old system all the more important. He transitions from condemning the family's omnipresence as oppressive, to saying in a positive light, "Whereever we go, we carry our family on our backs" (271). The

ending confirms the power of memory and history to give identity to the present. The book is a contradiction, because, “The old family institution with its out-dated moral codes crushes its descendants, but they do find in its past a fountainhead of life for themselves, a way to mediate their immediate reality” (Li 121). The present generation not only inherited degenerative diseases from the past, but also a rich traditional history that creates a vibrant cultural present. The lesson speaks to post-Meiji Japan specifically, which had gone a long way into Westernizing and attempting to forget their feudal past. *The Family*, however, implores people to hold some aspects of the past, while simultaneously condemning the oppressive aspects of the traditional value system.

However, Tōson retains his naturalist outlook on life by ultimately ending the novel on a pessimistic note. Despite Sankichi’s promise to respect the old ways, both families in the story end up destitute and more or less destroyed. The last line of the whole novel, “Outside it was still dark” (*The Family* 311), confirms that nothing has improved, and Sankichi still must struggle to find his way in the new world. Siu Leung Li writes in an article on *The Family*:

Both [families] fail to reinvent for themselves a sociocultural space for survival in the new Japan. The institutional failure of these two families crushes the composing members—the innocent as well as the guilty—with utter callousness. *It* is, in this respect, one of the most unsparing condemnations of the traditional family system written in modern Japanese literature. (Li 114)

Sankichi finds identity in the past, but ultimately it is not enough to reverse the degeneration that occurred throughout the entire novel. The family members that tried to uphold the old ways went insane or bankrupt; the members that attempted to strike out on their own ended up supporting

other members of the family. Tōson may offer a glimmer of hope in Sankichi's decision to respect the past, but ultimately he condemns old Japan as degenerate and oppressive. Japan cannot move forward by living in traditional society entirely – it must accept some changes in the present.

*The Family* acts as a metaphor for Japanese society at the end of the Meiji Era. Facing the rising influence of the West, and the new individualism that came with it, old structures began to fall. The family structure also came under threat, and they had to fight to survive in the modern world. The two families in *The Family* attempt to strike their own path, but ultimately are powerless against tradition. However, traditions are not entirely oppressive: *The Family* instructs readers to draw identity from the past, as it offers a common tie that binds all citizens together. Tradition binds the family, which represents the nation, together. New ways brought by the West may change structures, but the past always comes along.

### ***Before the Dawn: rebranding the Meiji Era and the tenkō movement***

Published in 1932, *Before the Dawn* tells the story of Aoyama Hanzō, a man in the Meiji Era attempting to face the changes of modernity while still holding on to his traditional beliefs.

While in *The Family* Tōson condemned the traditional family, in *Before the Dawn* Hanzō lauds the old ways and attempts to bring them back. Tōson addresses the cause of the move away from traditional values: the West. However, unlike in previous works where he uses the West to symbolize freedom and individualism, in *Before the Dawn* the West modernizes at the cost of identity and introduces Imperialism and war into Japan.



### *Redefining the Meiji Era*

Despite being published in 1932, the novel takes place in the Meiji Era. In 1932, Japan was coming off a period of great economic prosperity and entering the era of Imperialism that culminated in WWII. The country had invaded Manchuria the year before, and nationalist tensions were high. Japan was attempting to create a strong image for itself, which is why the Meiji Era stands out in Japan's identity. On the one hand, it symbolizes a time of great change and modernization. On the other hand, foreign powers forced Japan into opening. In his introduction to his translation of the book, William Naff writes that Tōson attempts to redefine the Meiji Era with:

a massive attack on the then widely held view that of the Meiji restoration as an almost complete historical discontinuity – a leap in one step from medievalism to modernity or even from darkness and savagery to enlightenment and civilization. He launched this attack by dramatizing the richness and intellectual vigor of traditional Japanese culture and then by reminding his readers that for all its political bankruptcy the shogunate enjoyed the services of a number of men of exceptional vision, wisdom, and courage. (Naff xii)

By writing about the Meiji Era, Tōson was able to rebrand feudal Japan as a culturally rich time period. He managed to revitalize Japanese culture and remove the stigma of the barbaric nature of pre-Meiji Japan, fostering nationalist notions of Japanese identity.

Like his previous novels, Tōson uses his main character to examine the interaction of old traditions and new Westernization. The protagonist personifies the romanization of the past as Hanzō is in love with the old ways, and is a student of the Hirata School, which follows the

“Learning of Antiquity” (*Before* 83). He becomes part of a movement that wishes to restore the traditions of the past, and as such he ideologically supports the Meiji Restoration and like revolutions, following the popular slogan from the time, “Revere the Emperor, expel the Barbarians”. The country eventually echoes Hanzō’s wishes and undergoes the Meiji Restoration, which gives total power back to the Emperor. The forces that seek Imperial restoration release the statement:

To restore imperial rule to the state of antiquity, it will not do to go back to the style of the abortive restoration of the fourteenth century; we must go back all the way to the style of Jimmu, the first emperor. (378)

The Meiji Restoration succeeds in reinstating the emperor to absolute power. Like Hanzō, Japan decided to move forward by looking backwards and drawing from the example of the past.

The decision to look back on the past romantically stems partially from a negative reaction to Western interference. While it is true that the old power, the shogunate, had been losing power before the Meiji Era, it was the Americans forcing the country open that forced things to a head. Hanzō himself comments on the role of foreign nations in creating Japanese identity when he says, “The more the foreign countries provoke us, the more we’ll look back to our own past” (84). Because foreign powers forced Japan to open, Japan tried to find strength in its past. It is interesting to note that Tōson does not look favorably on the foreigners as a force of modernity, as other writers had done before. Instead, Tōson rebukes them as Imperialist, saying:

If only the Black Ships had not come with people who would demand the opening of the country, by force if necessary....but if these visitors had come prepared to teach us about the true mutual responsibilities of nations, I am certain our people

would have welcomed them. And we might very well have managed to avoid the shock and deceit and confusion that took place within our nation. Unfortunately, the Europeans came to the people of this island in the guise of world conquerors.

(93)

Hanzō sees the foreign powers as antagonistic forces that made Japan give up their ways. They are not a source of modernity and individualism but a conquering force trying to take advantage of Japan. Hanzō then looks to the past for solace, to find the root of true Japaneseness.

*Before the Dawn* often connects change directly to the Western forces, and not in the most positive light. At one point in the story, Hanzō reflects on the change by noting, “Each time they received a new stimulus from Europe, some of those who had been sleeping would awaken and old values would begin to be overthrown” (202). Western influence had reached every part of Japan, even the Kiso valley, Hanzō’s hometown. On the one hand, the influence is a good thing because it updates technology. But on the other hand, it destroys the traditional systems. The main stimulus to all the change, though, is the Black Ships. Western influence changed Japan, rewriting culture, much to Hanzō’s despair.

However, it is important to note that the western influence also made Japan into a modern nation state. Without the West introducing the concept of Other to Japan, it could have never figured out Self in the sense of nation. In his book, *The Dawn that Never Comes: Shimazaki Tōson and Japanese Nationalism*, Michael Bourdaghs explores this concept. He writes:

*Before the Dawn* undermines Hanzō’s narrative of restoration by revealing that the images of a unified nation and an uncontaminated national space are not self-

generated, but in fact are dependent upon the present-day encounter with other nations. (Bourdagh's 187)

In other words, the creation of a unified nation depends on other nations. National consciousness depends on international consciousness. Bourdagh's also notes how Hanzō's insanity at the end of the novel is based on his inability to let go of the past and join the modern nation-state. The novel praises the past and roots for the Meiji Restoration, but "it also becomes the tragedy of a man who is unable to make the transition to the new form of temporality required by the modern nation-state" (164). As much as Tōson praises the Meiji Era and attempts to revitalize the old ways, the protagonist's ultimate failure to adjust to modern society explains the impracticality of his path. Traditional ways do not entirely fit into the modern nation-state because the modern nation depends on the international. Drawing entirely from Japan's own history ignores the constraints of the present. The Meiji Restoration may have destroyed many aspects of traditional Japan, but it also created a unified modern nation-state.

### *Tōson and the tenkō movement*

While the end of the novel offers a pessimistic view of the nationalist movement, the story parallels many of the right wing movements present in Japan at the time Tōson was writing. When the book was published in 1932, nationalist sentiments were on the rise. Right wing movements gained more traction, which called for fascism, in the form of giving Emperor Hirohito absolute power, and extreme nationalism. The nation also began to take on Imperialist ambitions. Eventually these ambitions would give rise to World War II; Japan sought to create a Unified Asia, and began to encroach on neighboring territory. At the time of *Before the Dawn's* publication, such ideas had worked its way into the government and armies of Japan. The

Manchurian Incident, and subsequent invasion of Manchuria, had occurred only one year prior. *Before the Dawn* echoes many of the nationalist sentiments, especially when it called for a stronger Japanese identity and for the Emperor to take more power. Hanzō echoes the ideology of many of the right wing fascists who sought more power for the Emperor and looked down on foreigners. But *Before the Dawn* also showcases another phenomenon unique to pre-war Japan: the Tenkō movement.

Like Tōson, many writers coming out of the Meiji Era found solace in the Naturalist movement, and quite a few went on to join the growing Marxist movement. A new genre of proletarian literature was born, and they used Marxist realism to expose the struggles of the proletariat classes, much like Tōson and the naturalists used realism to show the struggles of reality. However, the Japanese authorities viewed the growing movement as a threat to stability, as it fostered disobedience to the system and championed the power of the people, instead of the Emperor (Steinhoff 12). In reaction, the government encouraged tenkō. Simply put, tenkō refers to the changing of ideas from left wing (Marxist) to conservative right wing. However, by the 1930s, the word had evolved into a movement among writers. Many proletariat writers suddenly began to write pro-government works, eventually becoming propagandists during World War II.

Like many authors, Tōson gave up his Naturalist writings and instead lauded the government. During the war, Tōson censored *Before the Dawn* and, “Traces of colonial domination, social activism, and racial prejudice were erased from the works, rendering them fit to participate in the project of generating unprecedented levels of devotion and sacrifice to the nation” (Bourdagh 32). He also wrote essays on Japan. As Tōson was not a Marxist writer and did not completely

change his beliefs, he was not true *tenkō*. However, his works were highly revered by the *tenkōsha*, or *tenkō* writers. Bourdaghs offers an explanation to the fascination *tenkō* writers had with *Before the Dawn*, saying:

Attracted to the ideals of Marxism, yet forbidden from carrying them out in practice: through *Before the Dawn* they could understand themselves as tragic heroes..., the *tenkōsha* – who a few short years earlier had been advocating an explicitly antinationalistic form of thought – could narrate a position for themselves within the Japanese national community. (31-2)

*Tenkō* writers connected to Tōson. This is partially due to his Naturalist tendencies, which parallel Marxist realism in many ways. However, it is also due to the resilient quality of Tōson. Critics accepted his works as quintessentially Japanese literature, and as such drew different conclusions as to what that meant. The *tenkō* writers found a kindred Marxist, while the government found a conservative nationalist.

After the war, *tenkō* writers were looked down on, as were displays of ultra-nationalism. *Before the Dawn* was revised again to remove the censorship, and Tōson once again took his place as the definitive Japanese author. In fact, “in the more recent criticism, he is identified not simply with Japaneseness, but more precisely with a Japaneseness that postwar Japan supposedly lacked” (39). Despite the changing ideological climate of Japan, critics still used Tōson’s works to define Japaneseness. *Before the Dawn* was accepted before the war as the foundational story of Japan, as it rewrote the Meiji Era; in the war it reverberated with *tenkō* writers and took on a more nationalist interpretation. The novel, beyond telling the story of the Meiji Restoration, tells

the story of writers in World War II who were pressured to support an ultra-nationalist government.

## **Conclusion**

The works of Tōson span from the end of the Meiji Era to World War II. In that time he created new forms of Japanese literature. His novels became definitive works of various literary movements, from Japanese Romanticism and Naturalism, which he helped found, to the tenkō movement. Tōson's poetry and first novel, *The Broken Commandment*, defined Japanese literature for the coming decades. But Tōson's works did more than define Japanese literature: they defined Japan. He wrote in a time of change when new structures were replacing the old ways. As more Western influence entered the country, Japan looked to the past to find identity, strengthening nationalism. *The Family* and *Before the Dawn* helped explain the changes in traditional structures happening in a post-Meiji society. Readers found solace in the novels which depicted the same confusion society was feeling. Even moving into World War II, when the country underwent a great ideological transformation into a conservative nationalist country, Tōson's works continued to define Japaneseness for the public. Tōson's works are timeless, and help to explain every decade in which he wrote.

## CHAPTER IV

### POST-WAR AUTHORS

#### **Ishiguro's use of memory in undermining Orientalist preconceptions**

Even into the late 20<sup>th</sup> century, Orientalism still stained discourse on Japan. Around WWII, writers like Ruth Benedict wrote romanticized views of the country:

Japan had been arrogated under the trope of exotica or the hyper-aesthetic (zen, kabuki, tea ceremonies, geishas). It has been aligned with the warlike and the martial (inscrutable suicides, kamikaze, samurai), or else the two are yoked together under the sign of paradox, as in Benedict's study, which declares as the title puts it that Japan is *both* 'Chrysanthemum' and 'Sword.' (Sim 33)

Because he lived in England for most of his life, Ishiguro was aware of the Orientalist view that pervaded throughout English society. When he wrote about Japan, his novels specifically address and subvert Orientalist themes. His first two novels, *A Pale View of Hills* and *An Artist of the Floating World*, the only of his novels set in Japan, take place after WWII and deal with Japanese memory of the war. The generations clash on levels of nationalism and modernism, which further addresses the issue of Japan's image in the new era. Ishiguro utilizes memory and generational differences to subvert Orientalist themes found in Western literature.

Ishiguro's first novel, *A Pale View of Hills*, takes place in Nagasaki after the end of the war. The main character, Etsuko, has since moved to England with her new English husband and her first daughter Keiko. Ishiguro addresses Orientalism in the English through the comparison between



Etsuko's two daughters, Keiko and Niki. Niki was born in England after Etsuko remarried, and acts as the cultural foil to Keiko, who was born and raised in Japan. Ishiguro writes:

Keiko, unlike Niki, was pure Japanese, and more than one newspaper was quick to pick up on this fact. The English are fond of their idea that our race has an instinct for suicide, as if further explanations are unnecessary; for that was all they reported, that she was Japanese and that she had hung herself in her room. (*A Pale* 10)

The English focus on the suicide aspect of Keiko's death simply because she is Japanese. Since the novel was published in England, the passage acts as a condemnation of the English who assume all Japanese have an instinct for suicide. The actions of Etsuko's new husband also indict the audience. Etsuko says, "In truth, despite all the impressive articles he wrote about Japan, my husband never understood the ways of our culture, even less a man like Jiro" (*A Pale* 90). Again, the British attempt to define Japan without understanding the culture. In the novel, England views Japan in an Orientalist lens, a view that Ishiguro points out and condemns.

Through his stories, Ishiguro also reestablishes Japanese identity, which counters Orientalist preconceptions of Japanese character. Like Tōson, Ishiguro employs memory and history to reconstruct identity. The novel redefines Japan through personal memory, especially the memory of the war. Etsuko had lived in Nagasaki, "But then the bomb had fallen and afterwards all that remained were charred ruins" (*A Pale* 11). Memory differs from history in its personal nature. For example, the memory of the bomb dropping on Nagasaki means different things to different people. The novel best illustrates this point when Etsuko visits Peace Park and sees a memorial for the bomb:

It was always my feeling that the statue had a rather cumbersome appearance, and I was never able to associate it with what had occurred that day the bomb had fallen, and those terrible days which followed. Seen from a distance, the figure looked almost comical, resembling a policeman conducting traffic. It remained for me nothing more than a statue, and while most people in Nagasaki seemed to appreciate it as some form of gesture, I suspect the general feeling was much like mine. (*A Pale* 137-8)

The statue acts as a site of memory for the war, but has become removed from the actual event of what happened. The statue, which resembles “some muscular Greek god” pointing to the sky with one hand, and holding back evil with his other (137), erases the real memory of the bomb. To Etsuko, who lived through the event, the statue does not truly represent the horror of the bomb. The war, likewise, has become a memory for much of the world, and the bomb a symbol of Japan’s victimhood. In remembering the bomb, the rest of the war was forgotten:

The emotional devastation, the sense of terrible historical guilt, the unlocalizable shame that continues to accompany Etsuko even after she marries a British citizen and moves to the English countryside—all this is bound up with the bombing of her home city, Nagasaki, whose hills, which escaped nuclear devastation, symbolize an unrealizable yearning for a refuge from history. (Wright 58)

*A Pale View of Hills* acts as a memory of the war, the devastation that followed, and Japanese guilt. By rehashing the devastation following the bomb, Etsuko adds her memory to history, thus reminding the audience of Japanese guilt.

The novel also questions the memory of Japanese history through the clash of generations.

Etsuko represents the generation that lived through the bombing, while her first husband Jiro's father, Ogata-San, represents the old ways before the war. Ogata-San has much to say about the way things are changing after the war. He comments on the influx of American influence, saying, "These things we've learnt so eagerly from the Americans, they aren't always to the good" (*A Pale* 65). Mainly, he despairs that the way American democracy and individualism are changing Japan. In many ways, Ogata-San represents traditional Japan, but also Japanese exceptionalism. He says:

'The Americans, they never understood the way things were in Japan. Not for one moment have they understood. Their ways may be fine for Americans, but in Japan things are different, very different.' Ogata-San sighed again. 'Discipline, loyalty, such things held Japan together once. That may sound fanciful, but it's true. People were bound by a sense of duty. Towards one's family, towards superiors, towards the country. But now instead there's all this talk of democracy. You hear it whenever people want to be selfish, whenever they want to forget obligations.' (*A Pale* 65)

Ogata-San condemns the American influence, stating that individualism and democracy are destroying tradition. He says that American values promote selfishness and get rid of traditional values like duty to one's family. Much like Hansō in Tōson's *Before the Dawn*, Ogata-San reveres the old ways, especially principles like duty to one's family. His memory of the war equates the bomb with the loss of true Japan; he chooses to live in the past, instead of the present.

The other generations do not agree with Ogata-San's love of the past. Shigeo Matsuda, an old pupil of his, condemns Ogata-San's way of thinking, saying, "In your day, children were taught terrible things. They were taught lies of the most dangerous kind. Worst of all, they were taught not to see, not to question. And that's why the country was plunged into the most evil disaster in her entire history" (*A Pale* 147). Matsuda questions the old way of things, much like the younger generation after the bomb. They claim that traditionalist conservative thinking brought "the most evil disaster" (147), essentially blaming the old values for the war. The younger women also appreciate the changing climate, as they are granted more freedom:

While Ogata-San and Fujiwara equate "America" with the hideous otherness that undermines Japan's traditional values, women of Etsuko's generation consider America a land of opportunities. "America", whenever it emerges in conversations between Etsuko and her friend Sachiko, signifies the comfort, wealth and freedom that are denied to them at home. (Cheng 230)

The generation clash showcases how while the older generation wishes to cling to the past, the new generation realize the faults of the old ways. They wish to move on to a more American ideal, with individualism and democracy. By having the young question the teachings of war-time Japan, Ishiguro asks the reader to view Japan through the young people's eyes, instead of the older generation. Japan is no longer a land of "Chrysanthemum and Sword," but a modern nation learning from the past.

Ishiguro further expands on the theme of memory and identity in his second novel, *An Artist of the Floating World*. The novel covers the story of Matsuji Ono, an old artist who produced propaganda during WWII. Like Ishiguro's previous novel, *An Artist of the Floating World* uses

flashbacks to slowly tell the reader Ono's story: how he became an artist, how he moved towards Marxist Realism, and how he eventually was swept up in the fervor around the war. The use of memory in the novel works much the same as *A Pale View of Hills* in that it is used to explain changes in the present; "In *An Artist of the Floating World*, narrative and memory allows forging meaningful links between past events and present life, to define the present self in relation to the past self and to assert development" (Lalrinfeli 163). The assertions of development is important, as like Ishiguro's previous novel, Ishiguro fights to separate modern Japan from Imperialist Japan. But Ishiguro goes one step further in the use of memory: he establishes Ono as reasonable and not fanatical. Ono wants to help people, and honestly believed that a return to a more central government will help. Ishiguro redefines pre-war Japanese as regular people wanting change, instead of super-nationalists willing to commit suicide for their Emperor at a moment's notice. Ishiguro uses memory in *An Artist of the Floating World* to simultaneously disconnect modern Japan from wartime Japan and to fight misconceptions of the wartime era.

In many ways, Ono represents Imperialist Japan, traditional values, and the guilt the Japanese have from those values. Japan changes after the war as the Americans took over and instated Western democracy. Ono cannot accept the changes, and "Lost amid signs of a drastically altered landscape, Ono aches for the pre-war Japan that no longer exists" (Cheng 231). Like Hanzō in Tōson's version of the Meiji Era, Ono turns to tradition to make sense of the world, but tradition has been replaced by a new way of life. He wants to reinstate the old ways and tries to live as if he was still in the past. As he tries to carry the old ways with him, Ono ends up carrying a large amount of guilt too. Ono's guilt represents the feelings of current Japan, as "guilt, like shame, is a social emotion, and that its presence can often tell us more about the society producing it than

about the individual experiencing it” (Wright 63). However Ono does not see his guilt until later in the story, when he begins to realize that his past is causing problems for his family, and “Unable to ignore that the world now condemned his past deeds, Ono suddenly finds it to his advantage to admit to having committed great wrongs” (Lalrinfeli 166). Like others of the modern era, Ono has to repent to his past actions in order to move on. He realizes that the old ways do not fit in the modern era, and chooses to condemn his past for the sake of his family’s future. Ishiguro disconnects the past from the present through his condemnation of Ono and his inability to fit into the present.

The theme of guilt continues in the motif of suicide as other people involved in the war find they cannot continue in the new world. After the war, many people involved felt so guilty that they resigned from their jobs. Others went to the extreme of committing suicide. Ono laments, “The world seems to have gone mad. Everyday there seems to be a report of someone killing himself as an apology” (*An Artist* 55). The guilt of the past affects the perpetrators so much that they cannot live in the present. Generational disconnect also separates the past from the present. Ono views the deaths as a “great waste” (55), but Miyake, representing the younger generation, thinks they are a “great thing” (55). To the younger generation, an extreme apology is the correct way to deal with the mistakes of the past. Ono, on the other hand, does not yet understand the effects of his actions, and thus thinks the suicides are unnecessary, as they should continue to serve their country. Ono does not understand why people of his generation would commit suicide to atone for their wartime actions. He represents here the unapologetic and unashamed Japan. The suicides show how the old values have no place in modern Japanese society, a view Ono does not understand at the beginning of the novel.

However, not all people involved in the war felt the need to publically apologize; some of the older generation found it easier to deny the past than own up to their mistakes. Shintaro, a former apprentice of Ono, comes to Ono to ask for help getting into high school. He asks Ono to write, “that despite my eventually following your instructions over the China crisis posters, I had misgivings and indeed went so far as to make my views known to you” (*An Artist* 103). Shintaro wants Ono to tell the High School that Shintaro was not an Imperialist and actually disagreed with Ono. He is trying to conceal his past, effectively disconnecting himself with his past deeds and the propaganda he helped to create. Ono tries something similar by concealing his job during WWII, but “Ono's erasure of the stains of his past leave indelible traces ... and his narrative portrays that the reconstruction of his inglorious past has helped in understanding the events of his life” (Lalrinfeli 166). One cannot disconnect entirely from the past as it still informs present identity.

The interactions between Ono and his grandson Ichiro further highlight the gap between past and present. While Ono represents tradition and guilt, Ichiro is the new generation born after the war that grew up with American influence. Ichiro plays “Lone Ranger” much to Ono’s dismay (*An Artist* 30). Ono wishes Ichiro would play traditional Japanese figureheads, because, “It’s much more interesting, more interesting, more interesting by far, to pretend to be someone like Lord Yoshitsune” (*An Artist* 30). Ono does not like the American influence on Japan, as he “blames American concepts of individualism and democracy for the youth’s defiance” (Cheng 231). Ono wants to teach Ichiro the old ways, to continue them, but Ichiro is not interested. Ono’s disconnect with modern Japan shows in his inability to connect with his grandson, who likes American pop culture.

Ichiro's interest in *Godzilla* exemplifies the younger generation's disconnect from the war, and the sense of victimhood, instead of guilt, that they feel. To Ichiro, the war is a distant past with no connection to the present. He wants to see *Godzilla* because it is a cool monster film. *Godzilla* is an interesting symbol in itself, as the movie is an allegory for the atom bomb and fear of the atom bomb in the generations following WWII. When Ichiro finally sees the film, he cannot look at the monster due to fear. Ichiro's fear likewise shows how the past haunts the present, even those who know nothing of old society; "Secure in their historical framework, the young Japanese businessmen have no reason to be suspicious of their world" (Wright 73). However, when Ichiro ultimately sees *Godzilla*, he is terrified. The past, and the fear of the bomb, became personified in the present. Historical fears carry over into the new generation, despite the new generation not experiencing the cause of the fear firsthand. Ichiro, like others of the young generation born after the war, are disconnected from the reality of the war, but inherit the second hand fears from their elders.

Both *A Pale View of Hills* and *An Artist of the Floating World* use memory to subvert Orientalist themes and redefine Japan. The older characters, Ogata-San and Ono, represent traditional values. However, they clash with the new generation that has moved on to American democracy, choosing to condemn history. By having the generations clash, Ishiguro not only describes the modern Japan, but also gives traditionalists a chance to explain why they supported the war. War-time Japan was not a time entirely made up of fanatical kamikaze pilots, but reasonable men that got swept up in nationalist fervor. Ishiguro's novels artfully navigates Orientalist perceptions of Japan, subtly picking them apart through his characters' memories, and redefining Japan in a modern context.



## **The cultural odorlessness of Murakami Haruki**

While Ishiguro wrote about Japanese memory of the war, Murakami Haruki concentrates on Japan of the 60s to the present. He deals more with the economic changes Japan faced after the economic boom that followed the war. Through the economic, Murakami manages to create an atmosphere of globalism instead of nationalism. His works gained popularity in Japan and overseas, and have been translated all over the world. In some ways, Murakami's international fame speaks to the universal nature of his works, their so called cultural odorlessness. However, his novels actually offer subtle critique of current Japan, especially changing economic conditions. Murakami's novels represent a Japan secure in its national identity, who no longer feels the need to fight all Western influence with traditional cliques of Japan.

Murakami's novels appeal to readers all over the world. His fast popularity astounded critics, causing them to dub his rise to fame "The Haruki phenomenon," a phenomenon that "was created through satisfying the public's desire for something not national but universal" (Baik 65). His novels are relatable to multiple audiences, causing some critics to claim his work is universal. Critic Yomota goes as far to say that the lack of culture is what make Murakami's works famous, saying, "Murakami's novels are largely devoid of anything suggestive of this sort of traditional 'Japaneseness'. It was in the context of their cultural scentlessness, if you will, that his works crossed national boundaries" (Yomota 35). In his book on post-war Japanese transnationalism, *Recentering Globalization*, Iwabuchi Koichi outlines a theory of *mukokuseki*, or cultural scentlessness. He argues that scentlessness allows Japanese culture to cross borders and become glocalized in a process of transculturation as "foreign goods and texts are creatively misused, recontextualized in local sites, differently interpreted according to local cultural meaning"

(Iwabuchi 40). Murakami's scentlessness then is exactly what makes it transnational, allowing it to cross borders easily and apply to foreign places.

However, Murakami's novels are not devoid of culture; like Tōson he draws from a number of cultural influences, especially the hard-boiled tradition. When asked in an interview about the influences for his first novel, he said, "Although I was reading all kinds of stuff – my favorites being nineteenth-century Russian novels and American hard-boiled detective stories – I had never taken a serious look at contemporary Japanese fiction" (*Wind/Pinball* xii). One can read his works through the lens of the foreign influence. Hard-boiled fiction in particular influenced many of his novels, and "Chandler and the hard-boiled detective tradition have provided Murakami with a blueprint for protagonist and plot" (Hantke 5). The style of hard-boiled fiction is apparent throughout Murakami's works. For example, the opening paragraph of *A Wild Sheep Chase* echoes the style, using short, clipped sentences:

It was a short one-paragraph item in the morning edition. A friend rang me up and read it to me. Nothing special. Something a rookie reporter fresh out of college might've written for practice. (*Wild Sheep Chase* 3)

The very first paragraph sets up the narrator's character too as a stern, slightly alienated man who is more interested in facts than feelings, a type of character that copies the hard-boiled detective. As critic Hantke writes:

Even when un- or underemployed, Murakami's Japanese middle-class Everyman remains strangely unconcerned with money, career, or social prestige. That peculiar lethargy latent in Hammett's Sam Spade or Chandler's Philip Marlowe is brought into the foreground with Murakami's protagonists. (Hantke 6)

The protagonists of Murakami's novels, like the hard-boiled detectives, have a level of apathy to their surroundings and a code of life that echoes the most famous hard-boiled detectives.

Murakami's writing style also combines cultures as he melds English and Japanese language structures. Although he writes in Japanese, he developed his writing style by writing in English, then translating back to Japanese. As a result his writing has an almost translated feel. When questioned on how he developed his writing style, Murakami said:

Having discovered the curious effect of composing in a foreign language, thereby acquiring a creative rhythm distinctly my own.... I sat down and 'translated' the chapter or so that I had written in English into Japanese. Well, 'transplanted' might be more accurate, since it wasn't a direct verbatim translation. In the process, inevitably, a new style of Japanese emerged. (Wind/Pinball xiv)

The language Murakami uses then speaks to the transnational nature of his works as his writing style emulates some aspects of English in translation. The style helps his work to cross national boundaries, and the combination to language styles speaks to the multiple cultural influences, especially Western influences, found within Murakami's works.

However, despite the connection to Western literary traditions, Murakami retains distinctly Japanese themes in the content of his stories. His works are responses to specific occurrences in Japan, especially the rise of capitalism after WWII and the subsequent economic boom. In his essay *Domesticating Wild Sheep*, Hamada questions the inclination to find Murakami's works culturally odorless or Western. He writes:

Calling Murakami's texts universal or even westernized is inaccurate.

Murakami's stories have certain elements that fit the criteria of being culture-specific and sociolinguistic. For example, the implications of confusion in post-reconstruction Japanese society are specific to national identity. (Hamada 44)

He also notes that Murakami's works actually have elements of Japaneseness, saying:

Murakami's fiction has the undertone of "Japanese-ness" in which he uses situations that could appear to be universal—in that, anyone can relate to them—on the surface but are also commenting on specific functions of Japanese history and society. (Hamada 47)

Because of the translated nature of Murakami's works and the American influences, it is easy to find Western aspects of Murakami's works. However, to focus on only the foreign aspects neglects the rich cultural undertones of the novels. The novels react to modern Japan and the economic changes that swept through the country following the American occupation. Despite the Western influences, Murakami's works remain firmly Japanese.

In terms of direct references to the West, Murakami paints a picture of a Japan that has been shaped by Western influences, but is not preoccupied by them. Unlike Ishiguro, he is not trying to fight Orientalist notions; to Murakami, American influences have not taken over Japan, though they shape the landscape in subtle ways. Most references to the West exist in small pop culture references which speak to the economic blending of the two nations. Murakami makes short references to songs and movies, like when he mentions "California Girls" by the Beach boys and Lauren Bacal in *Key Largo* (Wind/Pinball 37, *Hard-boiled Wonderland* 71).

International events also shape character's lives, like the Boss in *A Wild Sheep Chase* who was

“incarcerated by the Occupation forces as a Class A war criminal” (*A Wild Sheep Chase* 57), and only features in the story because the Americans found him medically interesting and worked out a deal with him. Critic Hantke has a more sinister reading of the Western influence, opting to claim that, “Japan was as culturally colonized by the United States as most European countries, having reached a degree of saturation at which the boundaries between indigenous and imported culture were beginning to blur” (Hantke 11). The nonchalant references to Western popular culture do hint at a cultural saturation, but the idea of colonization takes the argument a step too far. The references to Western culture are more like name-drops than a sign of colonization; Western imports have made their way into popular culture, but they exist within the framework of Japan.

The closest Murakami gets to a critique of Western influence appears in the critique of capitalism. By the time Murakami began writing in the 1970s, American capitalism had taken root in Japanese society. On one hand it led to an economic boom that revitalized the country. However, the new system had downsides too. *Dance Dance Dance* is about a man who “lives in a world where human relationships are increasingly being reduced to economic transactions and where everything is for sale” (Dil 36). Capitalism has taken over even personal lives, rearranging the family structures. A common image from the time was the salaryman, the hardworking breadwinner who earned enough to support his stay-at-home wife. The salaryman was equated with masculinity and success, a go-getter attitude inherited from the Americans. However, Murakami’s protagonists critique the salaryman through inversion. His protagonists “do not admire traditional ideas of masculinity either in the workplace or at home” (Nihei 69). Instead,

they embody the idea of “the sōshoku-kei danshi, literally meaning ‘herbivorous man’ or ‘grass-eating man’” (62), which:

...denotes young men who, resisting traditional standards of masculinity, are less ambitious in their workplace, willing to save money rather than buy brand items or cars, and more likely to share an interest in fashion and sweets with their girlfriends than to pursue sex. (63)

The herbivorous man inverts traditional notions of masculinity. Murakami’s protagonists likewise fall into the category of the herbivorous man: they have little ambition, care little about success, and are often ambivalent towards women. Through the herbivorous protagonist, Murakami undermines the concept of the salaryman and thus the rampant capitalism that had overtaken Japan at the time.

Murakami’s novels are a mix of cultural odorlessness and critique of current events in Japan. The odorlessness allows his work to cross borders easily, making him a transnational author.

However, his novels still address Japan-specific ideas, specifically the economic changes of the 60s and 70s. Murakami, unlike transnational authors of the previous decades, is not preoccupied with defining Japan against the West. Instead he describes a Japan shaped, but not preoccupied, by the West. His works represent an end to Orientalism – he does not feel the need to describe Japan in clichéd, traditional terms in order to convey Japaneseness. Instead he creates a modern, industrialized Japan that is secure in its national identity.

## **CHAPTER V**

### **CONCLUSION**

A common theme among transnational Japanese authors is the interplay of nationalism and internationalism. Ever since the Meiji Era, when the United States forced Japan to enter the international stage, national identity has been linked with international affairs. The literature of each era proves this fact. From examining various transnational authors, one finds the correlation between national and international identity in transnational Japanese literature. Each author's views on identity echo various sentiments from each time, from Orientalism to uber-nationalism. Taken together, they chart the development of Japan as a modern nation that struggled to find its own identity in the international sphere that wanted to impose their own culture and ideas on them.

The Meiji Era marks the start of the development of Japan's national identity. Nation-states are a relatively modern concept, which rose with the codification of imagined communities, as helped by the invention of the printing press. Japan, however, did not become a modern unified nation state until Perry arrived with the Black Ships. His arrival threw Japan into a frenzy, sparking a chain of events that led the already weakened shogun system to collapse, the Emperor to return to power, and Japan to modernize into a nation state. The Western influence also confused the nation, as Westernization was equated with modernization. Many feared the power of the West and Western culture, and turned to the past for solace and identity.

In the Meiji Era, Lafcadio Hearn shows how Orientalism effected Japan, and how Japan internalized Orientalist views of itself, looking for the Periphery self in the triad of “Japan,” “the West,” and “the Periphery.” As a Western writer, Hearn embodies Orientalist notions as he created a binary between Japan and the West, oriented the West as normative, and heavily romanticized traditional Japanese culture (the Periphery). His canonization into Japanese literature also shows how the Japanese often internalized Orientalist notions in their quest to Westernize. From the very start, Western and traditional Japanese values clashed together as Japan tried to modernize while retaining their identity.

Sugimoto also shows Orientalist influence in Japan, but from the perspective of a woman born and raised in Japan. She tells the story of the migrant who moved to the United States, thus showing off the diaspora mentality as she became isolated from both lands in which she lived. Sugimoto shows Japan’s view of the United States as a place of freedom for women, but also a place of isolation for migrants. She also offers an outsiders view of Japanese family life, as when she returns she finds the traditions too constricting. By drawing direct lines between Japanese and American life, Sugimoto still embodies some of the features of Orientalism. She differs from Hearn in that she tries to draw comparisons between the two nations, but she still shows how Japan viewed itself as isolated from the rest of the world. Japanese exceptionalism still pervades her work, as Japan viewed its culture as markedly different from the rest of the world.

Writers of the Meiji Era, as showcased in Hearn and Sugimoto, focused on the binary between Japan and the West, often reacting to Western influence by overcompensating with traditional Japanese values. Both turn to feudal Japanese structures, aka the Periphery, to explain Japan to



the West. Hearn uses folklore to do so, Sugimoto tales of her Samurai class family. They both want to teach the West about Japan, but still fall prey to Orientalist notions. Both writers embody the feeling of the Meiji Era and the traditional notions gained popularity with the reinstatement of the Emperor. Their writing tells the reader how Japan struggled to create their own identity while attempting to modernize to fit into the international stage with the other modern nation states.

After the Meiji Era ended, Western influence became normalized in Japanese culture. In the early 20s, many Western concepts of individualism and capitalism swept through the country, gaining traction in popular culture. Tōson's early writings reflect that trend. His love for Western culture shows in his incorporation of Western forms in his poetry and novels. He also helped to start the Japanese Romantic and Japanese Naturalist movements, further aiding the growth of Western culture in Japan while retaining the Japanese literary traditions. His first novels also cover more transnational themes like prejudice as he tries to appeal to a global audience.

However, as Japan moved into the 30s, traditionalist factions grew in the nation. Tōson's works began to echo the shift too. In the pre-war era, Tōson shows the nostalgia for the past Japan, but also the feeling of the traditional family as oppressive. For Tōson, the family represents Imperial Japan itself, so the suffocating tradition acts as metonym for the Japanese way of life. Tōson still critiques traditional values, but he begins to look more at traditional society for identity in novels like *The Family* and *Before the Dawn*. As Japan took on Imperialist notions in the 30s, readers interpreted Tōson's works as calls to revere the past (though with reservations). The tenkō movement found solace in his works too, as the Naturalist aspects echoed the Marxist realism the

tenkō writers were unable to practice due to censorship. Tōson's works and the reception they received shows the complicated nature of pre-war Japan; while on one hand traditional nationalist sentiments were running high, on the other many people still disagreed with the old family system and wished to find hope in the individualism of the West.

After the war, the Americans occupied the country, bringing in democracy and capitalism. The modern writers reflect the changes brought by the occupation, and the post-war Orientalist that swept the globe. Kazuo Ishiguro embodies two things: the new generation who moved away, yet still feel connected to Japan, and the generation who wants to understand the changes that occurred in Japan as a result of the war. Many people were swept up in the nationalist fervor, but after the war denied their role. Ishiguro fought Orientalism in England by writing about the aftermath of the war. He critiqued Imperialist values by having the new generation in his stories question the old. By writing about Japan in the war, Ishiguro fought the stereotype of Imperialist Japan, saying that every citizen was not a fanatic kamikaze but ordinary.

Murakami Haruki also wrote about the post-war era, but he focused more on the artistic and economic features of transnationalism, as his works follow a hybrid Japanese-Western style, and he tackles stories that follow the economic change in Japan following the war. Murakami's works are often lauded as universal and culturally odorless, which helped them spread across the globe. But Murakami still remains a Japanese writer and tackles issues pertaining to the 60s and 70s in Japan, mainly the influx of American culture and capitalism. Unlike previous authors, he is not preoccupied with defining Japan to the outside world; he focuses more on the present internal issues instead of constantly drawing on the past and traditional values to fight Western

influence. Murakami writes of a mature nation that knows itself; the country is no longer preoccupied with fighting foreign incursions as it has a strong identity.

Altogether, each era's authors reflect different things about their time period. When examined together, one can understand how Japan grew as a nation from the Meiji Era to today. At first Japan was scared of the West yet wanted to assert itself as an independent nation and culture. Authors drew on the Periphery and traditional Japanese culture to define Japan as separate from the West. After the Meiji Era, American influence became normative to some respect, and authors like Tōson incorporated Western influence into their works to create new types of Japanese literature. Leading up to the war, Japan was swept up in nationalist fervor, again drawing on traditional culture to define Japan as superior to the West. After the war writers had to deal with new Orientalism of wartime Japan, and the guilt of the Japanese people. Ishiguro used memory to highlight this guilt and redefine Japan for the West. Finally, in modern day, Japan has become a multinational economic powerhouse. Writers like Murakami show Japan as a mature nation which is sure of its identity. Throughout the ages, Japan went through trials to discover their own identity as a nation. They had to fight Western influence for fear of becoming overcome and losing themselves. Transnational Japanese authors were especially concerned with Japanese identity, as they dealt with issues that cross borders. All the authors tell their own stories, but together they tell the story of Japan.

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